Occident was proceeding not only through the activities of Christian missionaries but through a growth in commerce. The opening of the Suez Canal in 1870, with its more direct route to Europe, and the increased use of steam in navigation augmented the commercial pressure on China. In nearly two decades the customs multiplied over fourfold, and foreign vessels developed a profitable carrying trade on the coast and the Yangtze. On the other hand, the total value of imports and exports rose with surprising slowness. Between 1865, when the close of the Tai P'ing Rebellion allowed trade to come back toward normal, and 1885, it increased only about a fifth. After 1885 it grew more rapidly, nearly doubling by 1894. Cotton led as the major article of import, with opium second. Tea and silk remained the chief exports, but by 1893 were suffering from competition with other Eastern lands—in the case of tea chiefly India, Ceylon, and Java, and in the case of silk Japan and the Levant. The American share in the carrying trade, which had been very large, sharply declined in the seventies. The British were still predominant in the oceanborne commerce and therefore also in the foreign communities in the treaty ports.

In those of the treaty ports which loomed most prominently in foreign trade, the merchants and some of the missionaries generally resided in special "concessions"—British at Newchwang, Tientsin, Hankow, Kiukiang, Chinkiang, and Canton, and French in Tientsin and Canton—in which the usual arrangement was that the ground was leased in perpetuity to the foreign government, and then sublet to individuals. These resembled but were not identical in form with the older Settlements in Shanghai. In all of them foreigners lived a life largely apart from

the Chinese. Most merchants did not know the Chinese language—although to this there were notable exceptions. They were protected by extraterritoriality—for this privilege had been accorded to citizens of other Western powers as their governments made treaties with China. Only in business did those in commercial pursuits have contacts with the Chinese, and then more often than not through an interpreter and pidgin English. Of the foreigners, the missionaries were the ones who usually touched Chinese life intimately at the most angles. Under these circumstances, the permeation of the Empire by foreign culture was slower than it might otherwise have been.